ED 423 097 MIGRANT STUDENTS ATTENDING COLLEGE: FACILITATING THEIR SUCCESS.
ERIC DIGEST.
1 OF 1 ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON RURAL EDUCATION AND SMALL SCHOOLS, CHARLEST...
MORSE, SUSAN; HAMMER, PATRICIA CAHAPE 98 4P.

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 097 RC 021 648

AUTHOR	Morse, Susan; Hammer, Patricia Cahape
TITLE	Migrant Students Attending College: Facilitating Their Success. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Charleston, WV.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-RC-97-10
PUB DATE	1998-09-00
NOTE	4p.
CONTRACT	RR93002012
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC/CRESS, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325-1348 (free).
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Access to Education; *College Attendance; *College Bound Students; *College Preparation; *College Students; Educational Practices; High Schools; Higher Education; Hispanic Americans; *Migrant Education; Success
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests; *Student Support Services

ABSTRACT

This Digest discusses common stumbling blocks that prevent migrant students from attending and completing college and examines ways that colleges and universities can help migrant students succeed. The basic steps of completing high school with adequate college preparation, applying to college and being accepted, obtaining financial aid, and progressing through college to graduation are complicated for migrant students by frequent moves, poverty, gaps in previous schooling, and language barriers. Other obstacles include recent antiaffirmative action laws, inadequate immigration documentation, and the pressures of family financial need. Migrant postsecondary participation is encouraged by high school and college counseling, access to financial aid, and the support of parents and educators. Programs promoting college preparation for migrant students include secondary school mentoring and advocacy programs, correspondence courses, programs providing academic support and college motivation, high school equivalency programs, and summer college residential programs. Colleges that emphasize multiculturalism or that serve large Hispanic enrollments promote college completion through peer support, culturally relevant courses, first- and second-language instruction, academic support, and work options. When selecting a college, migrant students should consider campus atmosphere and support systems, as well as various financial aspects. (Contains 14 references.) (SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 423 097

ERIC DIGEST

EDO-RC-97-10

September 1998

Migrant Students Attending College: Facilitating Their Success

By Susan Morse and Patricia Cahape Hammer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Slack

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
including
Alaska Natives and American Indians, Mexican Americans, Migrants, and Outdoor Education

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
PO Box 1348
Charleston, WV
25325-1348

RC 021648

EDO-RC-97-10 September 1998

Migrant Students Attending College: Facilitating Their Success

By Susan Morse and Patricia Cahape Hammer

Overview

To succeed in college, migrant students must (1) complete high school with adequate preparation for college, (2) apply and be accepted to college, (3) find scholarships or other funding to attend, and (4) progress through college to graduation. Being a migrant complicates these basic steps because of frequent moves, poverty, gaps in previous schooling, and language barriers. Migrant students also confront societal and institutional barriers, due to ethnic differences and community isolation. Despite these challenges, some migrant students attend and graduate from colleges and universities. This Digest discusses common stumbling blocks and ways colleges and universities can help more migrant students succeed.

Background

Migrants are defined in U.S. Department of Education guidelines as "...migratory workers, or the children of migratory workers who move for the purposes of obtaining seasonal or temporary work in agriculture or fishing" (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Poverty, language, and cultural differences add to the challenges posed by mobility, the identifying characteristic of the migrant child. Moving from place to place makes it difficult to attend school regularly, learn at grade level, accrue credits, and meet all graduation requirements. It is also difficult to participate in sports or other socializing activities and gain nonagricultural work experience. Mobility makes it harder to receive the adult support most young people need to prepare for college (Johnson, Levy, Morales, Morse, & Prokop, 1986) and meet the residency requirements of some colleges.

For more than 20 years, the U.S. Department of Education's Migrant Education Program has worked with states and local districts to improve high school graduation rates of migrant students. As a result, graduation rates have risen from 10% to more than 40%. This success was acknowledged in the 1994 reauthorization of funding for the program. Now educators are being urged to "...prepare [migrant children] to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment" (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Data regarding migrant college entrance and completion rates are limited because few programs track students beyond high school graduation. Also, funding for the Migrant Student Record Transfer System was terminated in 1994, eliminating a nationwide database on migrant students.

Migrant high school dropout rates ranged from 45% to 65% in two older studies (Levy, 1987; Vamos, 1992). These studies were based on students tracked from sixth grade or later. A high "disappearance" rate of migrant students impeded such studies; students were lost because they no longer qualified for services or moved and were not located again.

Far more information is available about Hispanic students in general. These studies are relevant because most migrants are Hispanics. One study revealed Hispanic enrollment in higher education doubled between 1984 and 1995, the largest gain among the four major ethnic minority groups. But only 45% of these students enrolled in four-year institutions. Hispanics are still underrepresented (by about 50%) in postsecondary institutions overall (Carter & Wilson, 1997).

Despite steady gains in the number of postsecondary degrees conferred, Hispanics remain underrepresented in this category also. In 1993, while Hispanics comprised about 10% of the U.S. population, they earned only 5.9% of associate degrees, 3.9% of bachelor's degrees, 2.9% of master's degrees, and 4% of professional degrees (Carter & Wilson, 1996).

Obstacles and Elements of Success

Various studies have identified obstacles encountered by migrant college students. For example:

- Since recent antiaffirmative action laws were passed in California, minority student participation at public universities and graduate institutions has decreased. The diversity of enrollment at private institutions, however, has increased (Carter & Wilson, 1997).
- Students with pending or without adequate immigration documentation face limited access to postsecondary education and financial aid. Some adult education programs and community colleges serve them. These students show an enrollment decline, while minorities generally have gained in enrollment (Carter & Wilson, 1997).
- Time is important for migrant students who must finish college and begin earning a living to help support family members (Young, 1992).
- In a study of 129 migrant youth who had received awards from the Mattera National Scholarship Fund, Durón (1995) identified financial need as the primary reason for dropping out of college.

The Durón study provided several other insights into migrant students' experiences before and after attending college. The most important factors contributing to students' decisions to participate in postsecondary education were:

> 1) access to quality high school and college counseling that offers an array of options; 2) personal factors, including the individual's motivation and beliefs about self efficacy; 3) financial factors including access to scholarships, loans, and work or work-study programs; and 4) ongoing support from family and educational personnel (pp 34-35).

The last of these factors was considered paramount by nearly all of the students. Parent involvement in decision making about education is key to an overall home/school/community supportive partnership.

Other studies have shown that certain preparations during high school can increase migrant students' chances for success in college:

- Schools should provide academic opportunities for making up credit, tutoring, appropriate courses, and test-taking and study-skills development (Johnson, et al., 1986).
- Schools need to nurture a supportive environment with expressed expectations by staff that migrant students will attend college. Staff should assist students in applying to and preparing for college, and encourage students to inter-

ERIC DIGEST

Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
including
Alaska Natives and American Indians, Mexican Americans, Migrants, and Outdoor Education

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
PO Box 1348
Charleston, WV
25325-1348

RC 021648

act with peers planning to attend college. This type of involvement increases college attendance rates (Horn & Chen, 1998).

- Parents need to become engaged in their children's education and discuss college options with them (Horn & Chen, 1998).

Programs Promoting College Preparation

Secondary school migrant advocates and advisors. In a Florida program, mentors monitor secondary student progress and attendance, facilitate work-study, provide family and community intervention, and promote college attendance. The mentors direct students to college awareness activities and assure that students take appropriate courses and college entrance exams. Dropout rates were lower in programs using advocates (Jones, 1987).

Correspondence programs. The Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) program (http://www.televar.com/pass/) is a mentored correspondence program that uses independent study and sequential curriculum units to cover subject areas from grades 6 through 12. Some students do not drop out, but fail to graduate because they lack credits; the PASS program addresses this problem by offering a program that allows students to study as they migrate. The program is offered in 29 states (Milton & Watson, 1997).

College preparation. In the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, non-college-bound students are placed in college preparation and advanced placement classes and provided tutoring, study skills, and college motivation. AVID students benefit from peer and school support and have a 90% college enrollment rate at 2- and 4-year institutions (Horn & Chen, 1998).

The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) is for migrant students who are at least 16 years old and who are not enrolled in school. The program helps them obtain their high school equivalency certificate and continue on to postsecondary education, job training, or the workplace. Students reside on campus at one of 20 colleges and universities around the country. The HEP program has a 70% GED completion rate; 29% of students enroll in postsecondary institutions (Biennial Evaluation Report, [1995]).

Summer college residential programs. These programs on college campuses are funded by the Migrant Education Program, other federal programs, or university resources. Chances for success increase because migrant middle and high school students live on college campuses far from home and engage in college activities and courses. In some regions, an advisor facilitates applications and scholarships to colleges.

Programs Promoting College Completion

Colleges emphasizing multiculturalism (25% minority) and Hispanic serving institutions (25% Hispanic enrollment) can provide peer support, culturally relevant courses, first- and second-language instruction, and cross-cultural experiences (Carter & Wilson, 1996). Ivy League colleges seeking to maintain at least 90% graduation rates have learned that monitoring progress and providing assistance prevents students from falling behind. Cooperative study groups significantly reduced minority dropouts at the University of California, Berkeley. College Assisted Migrant Programs (CAMP) have lowered freshman dropout rates by offering academic support and work options to students during their crucial first year of college (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992).

Conclusions and Recommendations

When selecting a college, migrants should consider campus atmosphere and support systems, such as academic support, clubs, and on-campus work opportunities. On-campus work experiences and participation in clubs or student organizations increase involvement in college life (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992).

Fink (1995) advised college-bound migrant students to share their interest in going to college with family, counselors, and others who can relate to their experiences. Students should take challenging courses in high school and take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT). Teachers, counselors, and family should all work together to support the student's plans. Visiting a campus and seeking information about financial aid are also important steps. Scholarship directories are available from many state migrant education programs.

Important financial considerations in selecting a college should include:

- an institution's graduation rate;
- the average years required to graduate;
- availability of courses needed for graduation;
- earning power at graduation;
- housing costs and options, including facilities for students during holidays;
- availability of public and private scholarships; and
- scholarship and loan packages, caps on loans, and loan payoff options.

Migrant students aware of their options for college generally are highly motivated to attend. However, in order to succeed, they and their families need knowledge of available educational opportunities and support from high school and postsecondary staff in identifying and overcoming obstacles.

REFERENCES

Biennial Evaluation Report (FY 93-94). Chapter 126, Migrant Education-High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education [on-line]. Available: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Biennial/126.html

Carter, D. J., & Wilson, R. (1996). *Minorities in Higher Education. 1995-96 Fourteenth Annual Status Report.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 407 892)

Carter, D. J., & Wilson, R. (1997). *15th Annual Status Report, Office of Minorities in Higher Education.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Durón, S. B. (1995). *Migrant farmworker students: Decisions involved in post-secondary participation and success.* Geneseo, NY: BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 383 506)

Fink, M. A. (1995). *Go for it! Migrant students succeed in college.* Geneseo, NY: BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 382 434)

Horn, L. J., & Chen, X. (1998). *Toward resiliency: At risk students who make it to college.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Johnson, F. C., Levy, R. H., Morales, J. A., Morse, S. C., & Prokop, M. K. (1986). *Migrant students at the secondary level: Issues and opportunities for change.* Las Cruces, NM: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 270 242)

Jones, A. (1987). *Summary report, migrant dropout prevention program.* Presented at Advocates/Counselors Training Workshop, Bureau of Compensatory Education, Department of Education, Florida.

Levy, R. (1987). *Migrant attrition project.* Oneonta, NY: Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training.

Milton, K., & Watson, J. E. (1997). *Distance education for Mexican-American migrant farmworkers.* AZ: Arizona State University.

National Commission on Migrant Education. (1992). *Invisible children: A portrait of migrant education in the United States. Final Report.* Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 348 206)

U.S. Department of Education. (1994). *Improving America's Schools Act.* 103-382 statute, Title I, part C, (Migrant Education) Program Purpose, Section 1301-(4).

Vamos, Inc. (1992). *National migrant student graduation rate formula, for the national program for secondary credit exchange and accrual.* Geneseo, NY: BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center.

Young, G. (1992). Chicana college students on the Texas-Mexico border: Tradition and transformation. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 14*(3), 341-352.

Susan C. Morse is the former Migrant Education Coordinator for Region XVI and is currently a freelance writer and staff development trainer residing in Carmel, California.

Patricia Cahape Hammer is associate director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools in Charleston, West Virginia.

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RR93002012. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI, the Department, or AEL.

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools is operated by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia and operates the Regional Technology Consortium and the Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education for these same four states. In addition, it serves as the Region IV Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center. AEL is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.